Pursuant to the COVID-19 Child Nutrition Response Act (H.R. 6201, Title II), and the exceptional circumstances of the COVID-19 public health emergency, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) has established nationwide waivers to support access to nutritious meals, while enforcing recommendations from public health experts with regard to social distancing measures. On April 20, 2021, the USDA released new child nutrition program waivers and flexibilities to support a successful school reopening in school year 2021-22. For a summary of the applicable waivers for the SBP/NSLP and SSO, refer to "Summary of USDA Waivers and Flexibilities for School Year 2021-22" on page 13. Sponsors must apply to the Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) to implement these waivers. For more information and additional guidance, contact the CSDE's school nutrition programs staff.

Note: This chart is for informational purposes only, and applies only to school year 2021-22. This chart is not inclusive of all USDA regulations and rules governing the NSLP and SSO, or the topics below. Information is subject to change.

SFAs must apply to the CSDE to implement the SSO in SY 2021-22.

Topic	NSLP, SBP, and Afterschool Snack Program (ASP)	SSO
Eligible sponsors	School food authorities (SFAs) with an Agreement with the CSDE.	SFAs currently administering the NSLP and/or SBP. *

^{*} SFAs must opt in to the applicable USDA waivers using the Connecticut Online Application and Claiming System for Child Nutrition Programs (CNP System). Refer to the chart, "Summary of USDA Waivers and Flexibilities for School Nutrition Programs" on page 13).

^{**} SFAs will be required to submit additional applications to implement this waiver. These applications will be provided by the CSDE.

Topic	NSLP, SBP, and Afterschool Snack Program (ASP)	SSO
Eligible sites	Schools: Public and private nonprofit schools of high school grade and under that are part of the State's education system. Residential child care institutions (RCCIs): Public and licensed, non-profit, and private.	Schools, RCCIs, and community sites. All sites are eligible to participate, regardless of percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price school meals. Meals may be provided to all children (enrolled or not enrolled in the district) at open sites.
Types of meal service locations	Schools and RCCIs.	Schools, RCCIs, churches, community centers, public housing, libraries, parks, playgrounds, pools, and other public sites accessible to children. When possible, the CSDE encourages using school sites for operations in SY 2021-22 through June 30, 2022.

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^{**} SFAs will be required to submit additional applications to implement this waiver. These applications will be provided by the CSDE.

Topic	NSLP, SBP, and Afterschool Snack Program (ASP)	SSO
Operational period	Instructional days when school is in session as established by the school district (first day of school to last day of school). This includes in-person learning, hybrid, or remote learning. Cannot operate during school vacations, weekends, or holidays (i.e., any day school is not in session and, therefore, not considered an instructional day by the district).	Same. For SY 2021-22, SSO meals may be served only for instructional days. Weekend or holidays meals cannot be claimed under SSO during the school year.
Method of operation	Meals must be served at a point of service (the point at which a child has had the opportunity to select all of the components of a reimbursable meal). Meals may be served in the cafeteria, in classroom, or other onsite locations. Meals may also be served to children learning virtually via such as grab and go and pick-up options for take home meals (noncongregate meal service). *	Same. *

^{*} SFAs must opt in to the applicable USDA waivers using the Connecticut Online Application and Claiming System for Child Nutrition Programs (CNP System). Refer to the chart, "Summary of USDA Waivers and Flexibilities for School Nutrition Programs" on page 13).

^{**} SFAs will be required to submit additional applications to implement this waiver. These applications will be provided by the CSDE.

Topic	NSLP, SBP, and Afterschool Snack Program (ASP)	SSO
Rates of reimbursement	NSLP/SBP/ASP rates.	SFSP combined reimbursement rate for rural/self-prep (\$4.3175 for lunch and \$2.4625 for breakfast). Note: The SFSP rates will be updated in January 2022.
Meal cost for children	Non-CEP schools: Meal cost is based on individual student eligibility (free/reduced-price/paid). CEP schools: All students receive reimbursable meals free of charge.	All children receive meals free of charge.

^{*} SFAs must opt in to the applicable USDA waivers using the Connecticut Online Application and Claiming System for Child Nutrition Programs (CNP System). Refer to the chart, "Summary of USDA Waivers and Flexibilities for School Nutrition Programs" on page 13).

^{**} SFAs will be required to submit additional applications to implement this waiver. These applications will be provided by the CSDE.

Topic	NSLP, SBP, and Afterschool Snack Program (ASP)	SSO
Additional Funding	Performance-based cash assistance: Certified districts are eligible for Performance-based cash assistance in the amount of 7 cents for each reimbursable lunch served.	Performance-based cash assistance: Not eligible. State Match funding: Eligible.
	State Match funding: Eligible. Federal Severe Need funds: 2 cents additional rate for lunch and breakfast for qualified NSLP/SBP sponsors.	Federal Severe Need funds: Not eligible.
Age of participating students	Students enrolled in a school with high school grades and under; including persons enrolled in a school program for people with a physical or mental disability; and persons under 21 enrolled in a RCCI.	Persons 18 years or younger and persons 19 or older with a physical or mental disability, as defined by the State.
Type of meals	BreakfastLunchAfterschool snack	 Breakfast Lunch SSO Snack (AM or PM) Supper

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Topic	NSLP, SBP, and Afterschool Snack Program (ASP)	SSO
Maximum number of meals that can be claimed per day per child	Three meals: Breakfast, lunch, and afterschool snack.	Up to two meals , or one meal and one snack, per child, per day, in any combination except lunch and supper. Note: Sponsors may apply to participate in the ASP.
Meal service time requirements	Breakfast: Must be served in the morning hours. *	Breakfast: Same. *
requirements	Lunch: Must be offered between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m., unless the SFA has been approved by the CSDE to implement the applicable waiver. * Snacks: Snacks provided through the ASP must be served after the end of the school day, or for extended school days, at least one hour longer than the minimum number of school day hours with CSDE prior approval.	Lunch: Same. * Snacks: Snacks provided through the SSO must be evenly and adequately spaced between other meal service times to minimize food waste and ensure good nutrition practices.

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^{**} SFAs will be required to submit additional applications to implement this waiver. These applications will be provided by the CSDE.

Topic	NSLP, SBP, and Afterschool Snack Program (ASP)	SSO
Meal Patterns	NSLP and SBP: Meal Patterns for Grades K-12 in School Nutrition Programs (CSDE webpage).	Same.
	ASP: Meal Patterns for the ASP (CSDE webpage).	
	USDA is allowing certain waivers for the meal pattern flexibilities. SFAs must apply to and be authorized by the CSDE to implement the applicable waiver. **	

^{*} SFAs must opt in to the applicable USDA waivers using the Connecticut Online Application and Claiming System for Child Nutrition Programs (CNP System). Refer to the chart, "Summary of USDA Waivers and Flexibilities for School Nutrition Programs" on page 13).

^{**} SFAs will be required to submit additional applications to implement this waiver. These applications will be provided by the CSDE.

Topic	NSLP, SBP, and Afterschool Snack Program (ASP)	SSO
USDA Foods	.3975 cents per lunch.	Same.

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Topic	NSLP, SBP, and Afterschool Snack Program (ASP)	SSO
Required monitoring by SFAs/sponsors	NSLP: On-site * review of lunch counting and claiming system for all SFAs with more than one school site completed annually by February 1. SBP: On-site * review of breakfast counting and claiming system for all	Review of meal counting, claiming, and meal pattern and food safety compliance at least one on-site * during each site's operation.
	SFAS with more than one school site. Must be completed annually by February 1 for 50 percent of sites operating the SBP. Each site operating the SBP must be reviewed once every two years.	The CSDE recommends following the monitoring requirements for the NSLP, SBP, and ASP and also recommends reviewing the sites the first four weeks of operation.
	ASP : Each ASP must be reviewed on-site * twice per year. The first review must be conducted within the first four weeks of operation. The second review must be conducted sometime during the remainder of the ASP operation.	
Districts contracting with a food service management company (FSMC)	No potential changes to the contract.	Review potential changes with sponsor's legal counsel for material change.

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^{**} SFAs will be required to submit additional applications to implement this waiver. These applications will be provided by the CSDE.

Topic	NSLP, SBP, and Afterschool Snack Program (ASP)	SSO
Offer versus serve (OVS)	OVS is optional for Grades K-8; however, mandatory for Senior High Schools operating the National School Lunch Program. *	Same. *
Public announcement	Required to provide public notification regarding the availability of meals and the eligibility criteria at or near the beginning of the school year.	Same. For SY 2021-22, the CSDE recommends that SSO districts also notify households that all meals will be offered free through the SSO.
Processing free and reduced-priced meal applications and verification	The processing of free and reduced-price meal applications is required as well as completion of the verification of newly approved applications on file as of October 1.	The processing of free and reduced-price meal applications is required as well as completion of the verification of newly approved applications on file as of October 1 for the purposes of eligibility for Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) benefits.

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Topic	NSLP, SBP, and Afterschool Snack Program (ASP)	SSO
Smart Snacks	The USDA Smart Snacks nutrition standards apply to all competitive foods sold on school campus during the school day in public schools, private schools, and RCCIs participating in the NSLP and SBP.	Same.
Potable Water	SFAs must make potable water available and accessible during the meal service if breakfast and lunch are served in the cafeteria. Potable water is not required for meals served the classroom and non-congregate breakfast and lunch meal service.	Same.
Special Dietary Accommodations	The USDA's nondiscrimination regulations (7 CFR 15b) and regulations for school nutrition programs (7 CFR 210.10(m) and 7 CFR 220.8(m)) require that SFAs make reasonable modifications on a case-by-case basis for children whose disability restricts their diet, when a recognized medical authority certifies the need. For more information, refer to the CSDE's guide, <i>Accommodating Special Diets in School Nutrition Programs</i> .	Same.

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Topic	NSLP, SBP, and Afterschool Snack Program (ASP)	SSO
Food Safety	Schools are required to obtain a minimum of two food safety inspections during the year. HACCP plans must be updated annually and a copy must be located at each participating site. HACCP plans must be updated to include different types of meal service as applicable, e.g., in-classroom, field trips, cafeteria, grab and go, and home delivery.	Same.

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Summary of USDA Waivers and Flexibilities for School Nutrition Programs

The chart below summarizes the USDA school nutrition nationwide waivers for SY 2021-22 that SFAs may opt in to effective July 1, 2021, with the CSDE's authorization. **Note:** The USDA expects sponsors to use these waivers **only for the duration and extent that they are needed**. The USDA encourages schools to return to standard meal service operations when it is safe to do so. Any changes to the implementation of the waivers must be updated in the SFAs online agreement, and reported to the appropriate school nutrition county consultant.

USDA Waivers and Flexibilities for School Nutrition Programs				
Waiver	NSLP, SBP, and ASP	SSO of the NSLP		
Allow Seamless Summer Option	Not applicable.	COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #85 Nationwide Waiver to Allow the Seamless Summer Option through School Year 2021- 2022		
Allow Summer Food Service Program rates	Not applicable.	COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #86 Nationwide Waiver to Allow Summer Food Service Program Reimbursement Rates in School Year 2021-2022		

^{*} SFAs must opt in to the applicable USDA waivers using the Connecticut Online Application and Claiming System for Child Nutrition Programs (CNP System). Refer to the chart, "Summary of USDA Waivers and Flexibilities for School Nutrition Programs" on page 13).

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USDA Waivers and Flexibilities for School Nutrition Programs			
Waiver	NSLP, SBP, and ASP	SSO of the NSLP	
Non-congregate meal service	COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #87 Nationwide Waiver to Allow Non- Congregate Meal Service for School Year 2021-2022	COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #87 Nationwide Waiver to Allow Non- Congregate Meal Service for School Year 2021-2022	
Meal time requirements	COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #88 Nationwide Waiver of Meal Times Requirements for School Year 2021-2022	COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #88 Nationwide Waiver of Meal Times Requirements for School Year 2021-2022	
Parent guardian pick up	COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #89 Nationwide Waiver to Allow Parents and Guardians to Pick Up Meals for Children for School Year 2021-2022	COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #89 Nationwide Waiver to Allow Parents and Guardians to Pick Up Meals for Children for School Year 2021-2022	

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USDA Waivers and Flexibilities for School Nutrition Programs			
Waiver	NSLP, SBP, and ASP	SSO of the NSLP	
Meal pattern flexibility	COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #90 Nationwide Waiver to Allow Specific School Meal Pattern Flexibility for School Year 2021- 2022	COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #90 Nationwide Waiver to Allow Specific School Meal Pattern Flexibility for School Year 2021- 2022	
Offer versus serve	COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #92 Nationwide Waiver to Allow Offer Versus Serve Flexibility for Senior High Schools in School Year 2021-2022	COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #92 Nationwide Waiver to Allow Offer Versus Serve Flexibility for Senior High Schools in School Year 2021-2022	
On-site monitoring	COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #94: Nationwide Waiver of Onsite Monitoring Requirements in the School Meal Programs – Revised – Extension 3	COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #94: Nationwide Waiver of Onsite Monitoring Requirements in the School Meal Programs – Revised – Extension 3	

^{*} SFAs must opt in to the applicable USDA waivers using the Connecticut Online Application and Claiming System for Child Nutrition Programs (CNP System). Refer to the chart, "Summary of USDA Waivers and Flexibilities for School Nutrition Programs" on page 13).

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USDA Waivers and Flexibilities for School Nutrition Programs			
Waiver	NSLP, SBP, and ASP	SSO of the NSLP	
Afterschool snack	COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #93: Nationwide Waiver of Area Eligibility in the Afterschool Programs and for Family Day Care Home Providers in School Year 2021-2022	COVID-19: Child Nutrition Response #93: Nationwide Waiver of Area Eligibility in the Afterschool Programs and for Family Day Care Home Providers in School Year 2021-2022	

^{*} SFAs must opt in to the applicable USDA waivers using the Connecticut Online Application and Claiming System for Child Nutrition Programs (CNP System). Refer to the chart, "Summary of USDA Waivers and Flexibilities for School Nutrition Programs" on page 13).

^{**} SFAs will be required to submit additional applications to implement this waiver. These applications will be provided by the CSDE.



For more information, visit the CSDE's Operation of Child Nutrition Programs during Coronavirus (COVID-19) Outbreaks webpage or contact the school nutrition programs staff in the CSDE's Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education, 450 Columbus Boulevard, Suite 504, Hartford, CT 06103-1841.

This document is available at https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/SDE/Nutrition/COVID-19/Comparison_Chart_NSLP_SSO_through_June_2022.pdf.

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 1400 Independence Avenue, SW
 Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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